

R E M A R K S

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-10 and 12 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 2 and 15 as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Although not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, claims 1 and 9 have been rewritten to include the limitations previously found in claims 2 and 15, respectively. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 5, 7 to 10 and 12 are now in condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 to 10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Banba et al. (U.S. Patent 6,128,242). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

By way of the present Amendment, independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 2 and 15,

respectively. Since these claims have been indicated as being allowable, independent claims 1 and 9 are now considered to be allowable. In addition, dependent claims 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 12 are also allowable based on their dependency from these allowable independent claims.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims now overcome the rejections, based on the Examiner's comments. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse (Reg. No. 27,295) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Appl. No. 10/028,686

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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